

REMARKS:

- 1) Referring to item 10) of the Office Action Summary, please indicate the acceptance of the drawings filed on February 6, 2004.
- 2) Referring to item 12) of the Office Action Summary, please acknowledge the foreign priority claim and receipt of the certified copy of the priority document, which was filed herein on February 6, 2004.
- 3) Minor editorially amendments have been made on page 3 of the specification, without involving new matter. Entry of the specification amendments are respectfully requested.
- 4) Claims 1 to 6 have been canceled, and claims 7 to 20 have been maintained as originally presented.
- 5) Referring to section 5 on page 4 of the Office Action, the indicated allowance of claims 7 to 20 is appreciated. Claims 7 to 20 have been maintained without amendment, and should thus still stand allowed.
- 6) Referring to section 6 on page 4 of the Office Action, please consider the following **Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance**. The Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance recites features or limitations that are **NOT** features or limitations of independent claim 14. For example, claim 14 does

not recite that the annular exhaust air space is "formed as a portion of said exhaust outlet passage". Instead, claim 14 recites an exhaust outlet passage as an additional element in addition to the annular exhaust air space, whereby the exhaust outlet passage communicates from the motor unit outlet to the annular exhaust air space. Furthermore, claim 14 is not limited to a "tubular exhaust filter material" but rather recites more generally "an exhaust filter arrangement", which is not limited to being or including a tubular exhaust filter material. Claim 14 is patentable because the prior art does not disclose and would not have suggested or rendered obvious the claimed combination of features recited in claim 14, including an annular exhaust air space between the main housing portion and the exhaust filter arrangement, wherein the annular exhaust air space communicates outwardly through the exhaust filter arrangement to an environment outside of the vacuum cleaner, and an exhaust outlet passage communicates from the motor unit outlet to the annular exhaust air space.

- 7) Referring to section 3 and 4 on pages 2 to 4 of the Office Action, the rejection of claims 1 to 6 as obvious over the prior art has been obviated by the cancellation of claims 1 to 6. The remaining allowable claims 7 to 20 are not subject to this rejection, so that the rejection is no longer applicable.

8) Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the application, including all present claims 7 to 20, are respectfully requested.

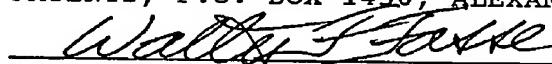
Respectfully submitted,
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Enclosures:
Transmittal Cover Sheet

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CERTIFICATE OF FAX TRANSMISSION:

I hereby certify that this correspondence with all indicated enclosures is being transmitted by telefax to (571) 273-8300 on the date indicated below, and is addressed to: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS, P.O. BOX 1450, ALEXANDRIA, VA 22313-1450.

 6/11/07
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